

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 COTONO 01364 061622Z

61

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-15 CU-04 AID-20 OMB-01 SSC-01 DRC-01 PC-04 HEW-08

OPR-02 /153 W

----- 023603

R 061515Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5482

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 1364

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, DM

SUBJECT: MINISTER OF EDUCATION REPLACED

REF: COTONOU 1279

1. AS PREVIOUSLY PREDICTED, SECOND "PROGRESSIVE" MINISTER HAS BEEN DROPPED FROM MRGD AS RESULT OF DECISION TAKEN AT CABINET MEETING AUGUST 31 (REFTEL). MINED, CULTURE, YOUTH AND SPORTS, CAPTAIN HILAIRE BADJOGOUME, HAS BEEN REPLACED BY GENDARMERIE CAPTAIN VINCENT GUEZODJE. ANOTHER GENDARMERIE OFFICER, CAPTAIN EMILE ATAHOUN, HAS BEEN NAMED TO REPLACE MAJOR RODRIGUEZ AS MILITARY COMMISSAIRE OF PORT MANAGEMENT COMPANY, ODAMAP. ATAHOUN WAS HIMSELF REPLACED AS DIRECTOR OF LA VOIX DE LA REVOLUTION BY A THIRD GENDARME, LT. DIDIER DASSI.

2. ACCORDING FRENCH CHARGE, BADJAGOUME FORCED CABINET DECISION TO ACCEPT HIS RESIGNATION (SEE REFTEL) BY WITHDRAWING TO HIS HOME
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 COTONO 01364 061622Z

IN ABOMEY AND DEMANDING REINSTATEMENT OF FORMER MIN PTT BEHETON

WITH PUBLIC WRITTEN APOLOGY. CRISIS WAS PLAYED OUT DURING VISIT OF FRENCH SECSTATE FOR COOPERATION DENIAU AUGUST 23-25. BADJOGOUME, WHOSE MINISTRY IS ONE OF PRINCIPAL RECIPIENTS OF FRENCH ASSISTANCE, REFUSED TAKE PART IN ANY MEETINGS WITH FRENCH AID OFFICIALS OR ATTEND KEREKOU DINNER IN DENIAU'S HONOR. WHEN KEREKOU SENT EMISSARY TO ABOMEY TO ASK HIM PARTICIPATE, BADJOGOUME ALLEGEDLY POSED IMPOSSIBLE CONDITION OF PUBLIC APOLOGY TO BEHETON. REST OF CABINET, INCLUDING MIN INTERIOR AIKPE, AGREED THEN TO REPLACE HIM.

3. NOT CLEAR WHY BADJOGOUME VIRTUALLY ASSURED HIS OWN REMOVAL. ONLY PLAUSIBLE EXPLANATION, WHICH OCCURS TO US, IS THAT HE REALIZED HE WOULD BE ISOLATED AND CONTROLLED IF HE REMAINED IN THE CABINET (REFTEL). TO PRESERVE AND PERHAPS EXPAND HIS CONSTITUENCY AMONG YOUTH AND PROGRESSIVES, HE CHOSE POLITICAL MARTYRDOM RATHER THAN

COMPROMISE IN HOPE THIS WILL PAY OFF IN FUTURE.

4. WE UNDERSTAND NAMING OF GENDARMERIE OFFICERS TO THREE IMPORTANT OFFICES HAS PLACATED GENDARMES WHO WERE DISPLEASED AT LOSING CABINET POST WHEN BEHETON WAS DISMISSED. THEY NOW AGAIN HAVE THREE CABINET PORTFOLIOS, E.E., HEALTH, JUSTICE, AND EDUCATION. ALTHOUGH GENDARMERIE IS NOT CONSIDERED PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE MILITARILY, THEY DO HAVE TO BE COUNTED IN ANY CALCULATION OF RELATIVE ARMED STRENGTH IN DAHOMEY.

5. FRENCH CHARGE TOLD US NEW MINED WAS CONSIDERED OUTSTANDING CADET AT ST. CYR. DAHOMEAN MAGISTRATE NOT SYMPATHETIC TO REGIME SASYS GUEZODJE DID EXCELLENT JOB AS JUSTICE MINISTER UNDER COLONEL ALLEY IN 1968. WELL INFORMED FRENCH SOURCE ALSO HAS HIGH OPINION OF NEW MINISTER AND THINKS HE WILL DO WELL IN RUNNING DIFFICULT EDUCATION MINISTRY. GUEZODJE REPORTEDLY JUST RETURNED FROM EIGHT-DAY TRIP TO RUSSIA, POSSIBLY SEEKING MILITARY ASSISTANCE, AS GENDARMES IN MARKET FOR NEW EQUIPMENT. GUEZODJE NOT CONSIDERED BE IDEOLOGICALLY MOTIVATED, AND IS CLOSE ASSOCIATE OF FRANCOPHILE MIN JUSTICE OHOUENS, ALSO OF GENDARMERIE.

6 FRENCH CHARGE AGREES WITH OUR ASSESSMENT THAT DANGER OF EFFECTIVE CHALLENGE TO PRESENT GOVERNMENT NOT INCREASED BY THIS INTERNAL CRISIS, DESPITE SPECULATION AMONG VOLUBLE DAHOMEANS PREDICTING FORCIBLE CHANGE IN NEXT MONTH OR EVEN AT TIME OF RENTREE SCOLAIRE. CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 COTONO 01364 061622Z

MOST POTENT ELEMENT STRENGTHENING KEREKOU'S POSITION CONTINUES BE FACT HE IS NORTHERNER. YOUNG OFFICERS WHO MIGHT WISH REMOVE HIM, SUCH AS AIKPE AND ASSOGBA, ARE SOUTHERNERS FROM FON TRIBLE. THEY SURELY AWARE THAT, SHOULD THEY ATTEMPT MOVE AGAINST KEREKOU AND NORTHERN COLLEAGUES, THEY WOULD SPLIT COUNTRY AND ARMY. REACTION FROM NORTH LIKELY BE SIMILAR TO THAT WICH IBO OFFICERS PRECIPITATED IN FIRST NIGERIAN COUP. COUNTRY CERTAINLY UNGOVERNABLE WITHOUT NORTHERN ACQUIESCENCE, AND SOME OF BEST SOLDIERS IN ARMY

ARE FROM NORTH. ON OTHER HAND, KEREKOU CANNOT DIVEST HIMSELF OF YOUNT TURKS, AIKPE AND ASSOGBA, WHO COMMAND TWO STRONGEST UNITS IN ARMY. KEREKOU'S EFFORT REINFORCE HIS POSITION BY APPOINTING FELLOW NORTHERNER, LT. COLONEL MAURICE KOUANDETE, AS CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF WAS SUBJECT BITTER, INCONCLUSIVE CABINET DEBATE FOR MOST OF PAST WEEK.

7 DEPARTURE BADIOGOUME AND BEHETON, WHILE ALTERING IDEOLOGICAL COLORATION OF CABINET HAS NOT APPRECIABLY CHANGED POWER BALANCE. THERE

ARE RUMORS OF IMPENDING TROUBLE WITH STUDENTS WHEN CLASSES RESUME LATER IN MONTH. BADIOGOUME IS POPULAR WITH MILITANT ELEMENTS AMONG STUDENTS AND TEACHERS. HIS DISMISSAL AT CRITICAL POINT IN REORGANIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM COULD CONCEIVABLY PRODUCE DEMONSTRATIONS AND DISORDER IN COTONOU. HOWEVER, IT DOUBTFUL YOUNG ARMY OFFICERS WOULD USE THIS OCCASION TO MOVE AGAINST KEREKOU. FOR EXAMPLE, AIKPE, WHO WOULD HAVE TO BE KEY FIGURE IN ANY EFFECTIVE CHALLENGE TO REGIME, HAS SHOWN NO SYMPATHY IN PAST FOR STUDENT DEMONSTRATORS. THUS, MOST LIKELY OUTCOME IS CONTINUED STAND-OFF BETWEEN FACTIONS. IT IS A DELICATE BALANCE, BUT ONE THAT WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE FOR SOME TIME.

ANDERSON

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 SEP 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973COTONO01364
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1 ANDERSON
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: COTONOU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730952/aaaablzc.tel
Line Count: 137
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: COTONOU 1279
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: WITHDRAWN <08-Jan-2002 by boyleja, 3.4.X1>; RELEASED <28-Jan-2002 by golinofr>; APPROVED <28-Jan-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MINISTER OF EDUCATION REPLACED
TAGS: PFOR, DM
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005